

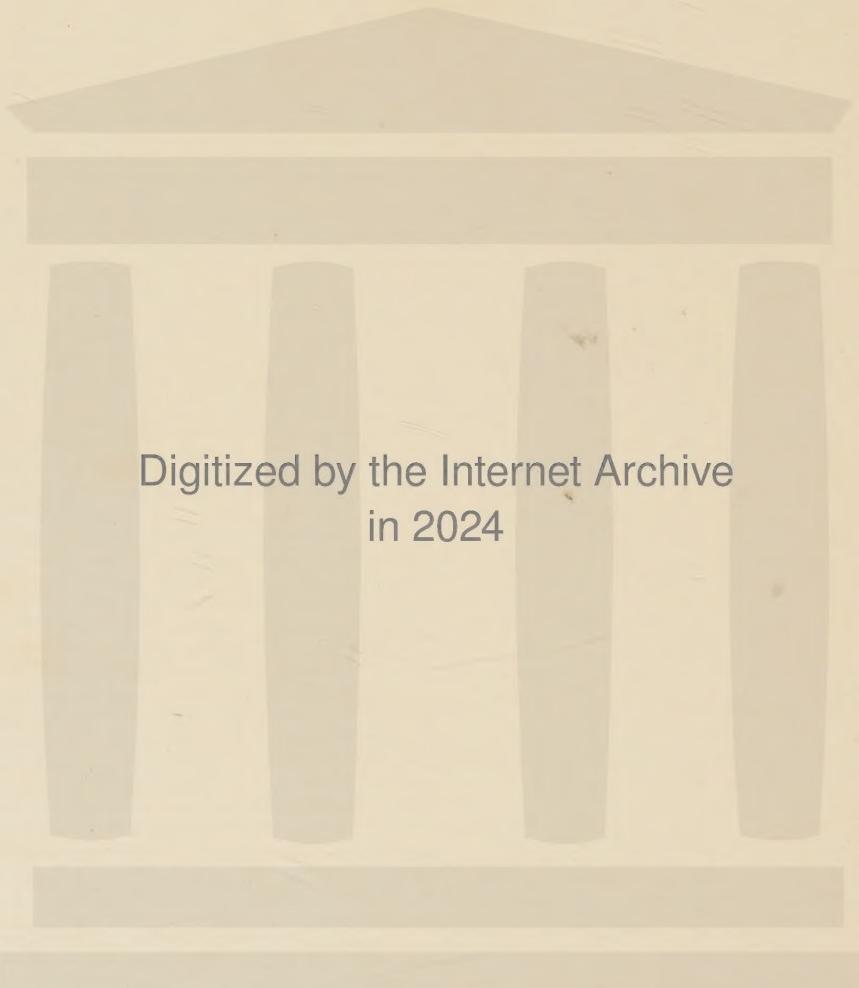


A  
LITTLE GALLERY  
OF  
GREAT MASTERS

SOME  
BRITISH  
PAINTERS

JAMES BAIKIE.





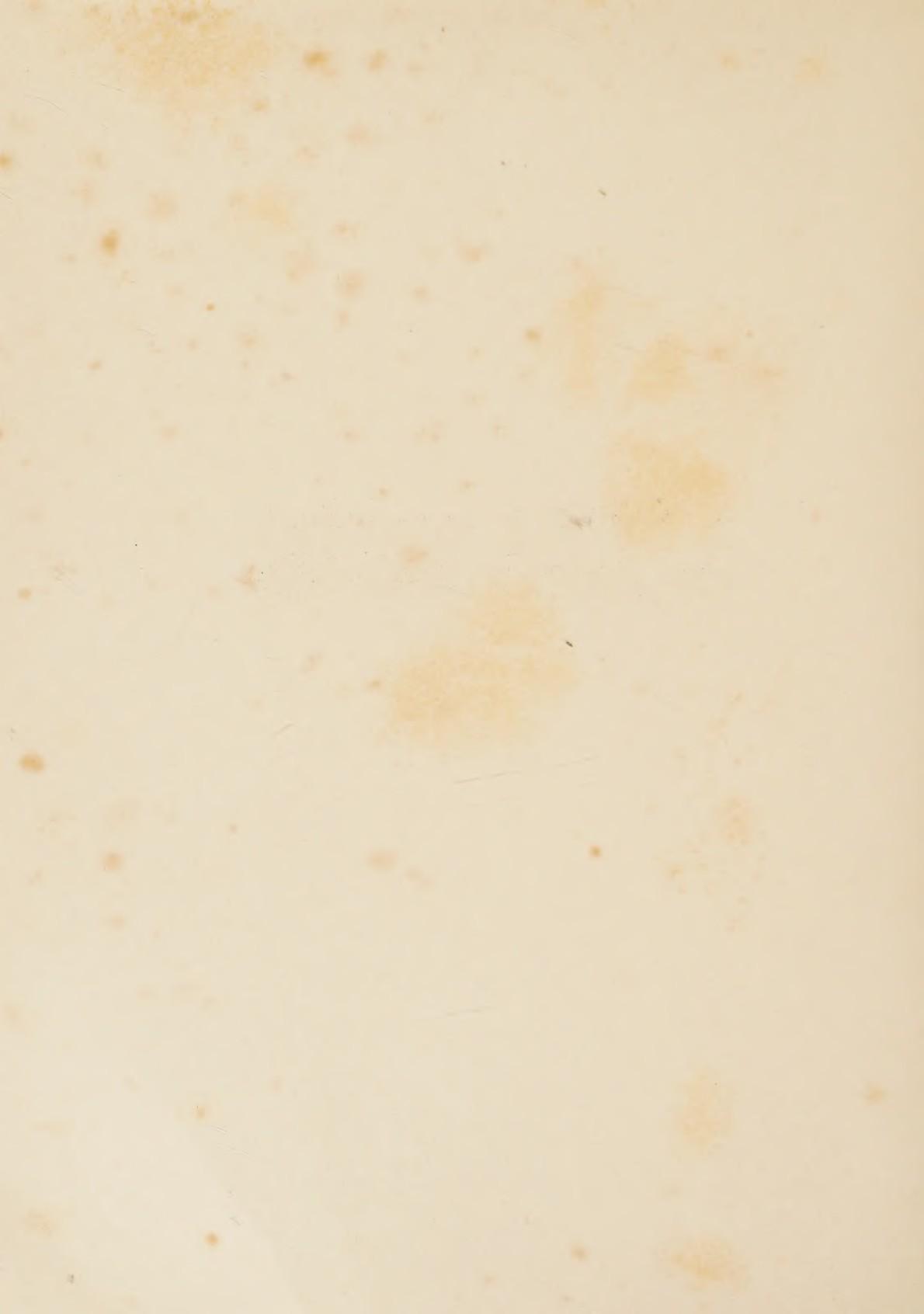
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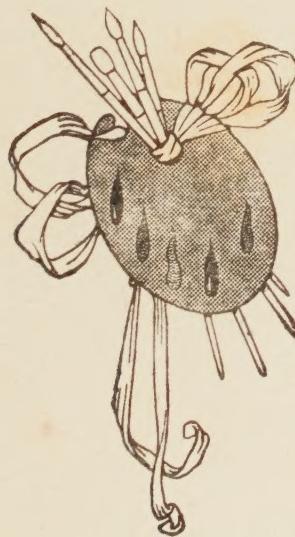
Lord Heathfield.

A Little Gallery of Great Masters

# SOME BRITISH PAINTERS

BY  
**JAMES BAIKIE, F.R.A.S.**

*Author of*  
*"The Royal Navy," "The Heavens," "Ancient Egypt," and "Ancient Assyria"*  
*in the "Peeps" Series.*



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# A LITTLE GALLERY OF GREAT MASTERS

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## No. 1.—Some British Painters

**T**HE LORD MACAULAY has told us in one of his letters how on a certain day he entertained his niece, Margaret Trevelyan, and his nephews, George Trevelyan and Charley Cropper, at a little dinner-party. He gave them fowl, ham, marrow-bones, tart, ices, olives and champagne, so that, if they were not ill, they ought to have been. After dinner, not knowing very well what to do with the youngsters, he took them to the National Gallery and showed them the pictures, and he was greatly amused to see the attempts which Margaret and Charley made to seem as though they knew all about it. But George—Sir George Trevelyan he was to be in after days, the writer of his uncle's life—made no pretences. “Let us go,” he said in disgust, “there is nothing here that I care for at all. I do not call this seeing sights. I have seen no sight to-day.” “Many a man,” says his uncle, “who has laid out thirty thousand pounds on

paintings would, if he spoke the truth, own that he cared as little for the art as poor Georgy."

I wonder if young folks nowadays are still of George Trevelyan's opinion, and, like our cross-grained old German King George, care nothing for "Bainting and Poetry." Surely not—at least whether you like "Poetry" or not, I fancy we all, young and old, like pictures. So in this little book I want to show you some of the greatest pictures that were ever painted by four of the greatest painters who ever lived in this country, and to tell you a little about the lives and the work of these great men. They all belong practically to the one time, the time when George III. was king, and when our forefathers were fighting the French, and laying the foundations of one empire while they were losing another by their quarrel with the American Colonies. It was a time when life was very bright and beautiful to look at, though there was a lot of cruelty and suffering under the surface—a time when fine ladies went about in Sedan-chairs, and were dressed in gorgeous silks and satins, and wore powder in their hair and paint and patches on their cheeks, and when the fine gentlemen who accompanied them were not dressed in dingy black or ugly tweeds, but wore wonderful coats of satin or velvet, bloom-coloured, sky-blue, or scarlet, with lace ruffles that might cost a small fortune at neck

and wrists, and carried silver-hilted small swords, with which they fought one another over the slightest disagreement.

Now it happened, fortunately, that just before this gay, butterfly style of life, with all its flash and glitter of colour and jewel, passed away into the quieter style that we know to-day (it was really the horrors of the French Revolution and the great struggle which followed that gave the death-blow to it all), there arose in England and in Scotland a new school of painters, at the head of which there stood four great men, who have painted the people of that time so wonderfully that we seem to know them almost as well as if we had lived beside them. The names of the four were: Sir Joshua Reynolds, Thomas Gainsborough, George Romney, and Sir Henry Raeburn. Of course there were other good painters in those days, though not very many; but it was these four who really taught the world that Britain had painters who need not fear comparison with the very best that any other nation could produce. For the strange thing was that almost up to the time I am talking about, Art had taken very little real hold in our country, and few people, either at home or abroad, expected that we should ever do very much at it. Italy had had the greatest of all schools of painting, where all lovers of art still find what is best and

noblest ; Spain had had its school, with one supreme genius at the head of it, the great Velasquez ; even little Flanders had produced painters who rank second only to those of Italy ; but Britain lagged far behind. Certainly there were pictures painted in this country ; but the best of them were only second-rate compared with the work of the great masters of the Continent.

When England began to wake up to the knowledge of her strength, she began also to crave after the fine things that other nations delighted in, and in the times of Henry VIII. and, later, of Charles I., there were some magnificent pictures painted in this country ; but they were not done by English or Scottish artists, but by foreigners, Holbein, the great German, Van Dyck, the great Flemish painter, and others like these. Later, when Charles II. came back after the Commonwealth, it was still foreigners who were our chief painters. The famous beauties of Charles's gay court were nearly all painted by another Flemish artist, Sir Peter Lely, while those of Queen Anne's time are painted by a German, Sir Godfrey Kneller.

Then came the first really great English painter, William Hogarth, a thorough John Bull Englishman, and, as everyone recognises now, a master craftsman. His wonderful pictures, not very pleasant to look at, some of them, but full of power

and genius, helped to break the spell, and to teach our own people at least that to paint great pictures you did not need to be an Italian, a Fleming, or a German. And so he, and others of lesser note, prepared the way for that remarkable group of British painters who have left us in all the glow of colour the record of those brave days when Dr. Johnson talked wisdom and drank innumerable cups of tea, and Elliot held Gibraltar for years against the utmost power of France and Spain, and Rodney broke De Grasse's line at Dominica, and when the fashionable streets of London looked gay as a Dutch tulip farm in April with the brocades and velvets of the beaux and belles of King George's court.

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SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS, the first of our famous four, was born in 1723 at Plympton in Devonshire. His father was teacher of the school there, a good, simple, easy-going man, so absent-minded that when one of his big boots fell off one day as he was riding, he jogged on to the end of his journey quite unaware of his loss, and only discovered it when he came to dismount. Joshua thought more of drawing than of learning at his father's school; and there is still in existence a drawing of part of the school, with a note upon it by the half proud, half angry father: "This is drawn by Joshua in

school out of pure idleness." When the boy was seventeen he was asked whether he would be a painter or an apothecary, and with that shrewdness which never left him, he answered, "I will be a painter if you will give me the chance to be a good one ; if not I will sell drugs." So the boy was packed off to London to learn his art in the studio of a painter called Thomas Hudson ; but before long the old artist and the younger one quarrelled, and Reynolds came back to Devonshire.

There he met Captain Keppel, afterwards to be famous as Admiral Keppel. The young sailor was going out to the Mediterranean as Commodore of a squadron, and he offered Joshua a passage. The offer was accepted, and the young artist thus found his way to Italy and learned to know and love the great pictures of the famous Italians, Michael Angelo, Raphael and Titian. In 1752 he returned home, deaf for life unfortunately, from a cold caught in the Vatican, and early in the next year he set up house in London and began to work as a portrait painter.

One of his first pictures, a portrait of his friend Keppel, made a great sensation, and very quickly all the fashionable folks were flocking to his studio to have their faces, beautiful or ugly, recorded by his skilful hands. I need not trouble you with any long story of his wonderful success.

He was a tremendous worker, sometimes painting 150 pictures in a single year; and before he died, nearly all the fine ladies and great men of his time had passed up the stairs of his house in Leicester Square and sat in Sir Joshua's arm-chair while he chatted and painted. He was the chosen friend of many of the best and greatest men of the time, and among his particular intimates were Edmund Burke, Oliver Goldsmith, and greatest of all, Dr. Samuel Johnson. Johnson and Sir Joshua loved one another dearly, and, though the rough old scholar was so short-sighted that he could scarcely tell a picture from a haystack, he used to go to all the exhibitions just to show his pride in his friend's work. But perhaps it was Goldsmith, the gentle, brilliant, kind-hearted, clumsy Irishman, who came the nearest to Sir Joshua's cautious heart; and when Goldsmith died the great painter laid aside his brushes and painted no more that day, though he painted to within an hour of being knighted by the King, and was back at work again an hour after.

When the Royal Academy was founded in 1768, Sir Joshua was elected its first President, and knighthood came along with the Presidency, though King George had no great love for his President's pictures, preferring mostly second-rate work. But neither Royal favour nor its absence

could make much difference to the great artist. All the beauty and fashion of London flowed through his studio, and he grew rich as well as famous. As he grew old he began to take his work a little more quietly, but his art was not only work to him, it was the delight of his life, and he almost grudged the moments he could not give to it.

At last, one July day in 1789, while he was painting away as happily as ever, the sight of his left eye suddenly failed. The great painter quietly laid down his brushes, and remarked calmly and bravely, "All things have an end, and I have come to mine." His work was done, and the skilful hands that have created so much beauty for us were to find their occupation gone, or to be employed only in dusting the pictures that once they painted. Gradually his sight failed almost entirely. The old man used to walk up and down his studio with a little canary perched on his finger, and when it flew out of the window one day and was lost, it was a pathetic sight to see the great artist wandering up and down Leicester Square, vainly hoping that his little friend would come back. In February, 1792, death released him, and he was laid to rest in St. Paul's by "three dukes, two marquesses, and five other noblemen." The honour was to them and not to him ; for he was greater than any or all of them.

Out of the hundreds of pictures he has left, I have chosen two, to give you some idea of the work of this famous man. I wonder what you will think of the first. For I have chosen, not one of the beautiful ladies whom he used to paint so well, but a grim old soldier, with a faded red coat, and a face so rough and weather-beaten that it looks as though it had been hewn out of a gnarled old oak. In his one hand he holds a great key, whose chain is wound round his knuckles; behind him heavy clouds of smoke drift across the sky, and a great gun points downwards from its carriage towards the sea. You could not call it a beautiful picture, but it is a splendid one; and it is history as well as art. For this is General Elliot, Lord Heathfield, who held the Rock of Gibraltar for four long years against all the fleets and armies of France and Spain, and the key and the gun are the memorials of one of the greatest defences of the world's history.

Our next picture is as different as a picture well can be from sturdy old Lord Heathfield with his bull-dog determination. When the father and mother of little Miss Bowles, who sits here on the ground hugging her spaniel, consulted Sir George Beaumont as to whether they should go to Reynolds or Romney for their daughter's portrait, Sir George said, "Reynolds," without hesitation. They objected that Sir Joshua's pictures faded, as, unfortunately, a

good many of them did. "Never mind," he said, "Even a faded picture by Reynolds will be the finest thing you can have." So the great man was asked to dinner, and the little girl was placed near him at dessert, and "he amused her so much with stories and tricks that she thought him the most charming man in the world. . . . The next day she was delighted to be taken to his house, where she sat down with a face full of glee, the expression of which he at once caught and never lost."

So her picture turned out as you see it, one of the loveliest child pictures ever painted, and it did not fade after all, but remains wonderfully fresh even after 150 years. Indeed, Sir Joshua was often at his best when painting the little folks, for he loved them, though he was an old bachelor. Everybody knows his "Age of Innocence," one of the pictures you can never forget, with its sweet simplicity. And it is pleasant to remember that the last entry in the great painter's engagement book is "Children."

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The second of the four great painters, Thomas Gainsborough, was born just four years later than Sir Joshua, at the little town of Sudbury, in Suffolk. He was the youngest of a family of nine, and there was a vein of cleverness running through them all, though Tom was the only one to make a name.



Miss Bowles.



With him the cleverness ran all in one direction. Sketching and painting were the passions of his life, and he was never so happy as when he could get a holiday and spend the whole day in the country sketching the scenery. On one occasion he got his holiday in rather a doubtful fashion, for he forged his father's signature to a note asking his teacher to "give Tom a holiday." The trick was discovered, and when his father saw the forgery, he said, "Tom will be hanged some day," but when he saw the sketches that the truant had made, he changed his tune, and said, "Tom will be a genius."

When the boy was fourteen he was sent to London to pick up what art teaching he could, and there he struggled along for several years, learning what such teachers as could then be had were able to teach him, and trying to make a scanty living by painting pictures on his own account. After a while he found the battle too hard, and came back to Suffolk ; but he never dreamed of giving up his art, and it was while he was sketching in the country that he first met his future wife. She was only 18 and he only 19, mere boy and girl, when they married ; but she proved a good and careful wife to her kind-hearted but haphazard husband. When they did have a little quarrel, Gainsborough would tie a note asking pardon to the collar of his dog Fox, and send him to Mrs. Gainsborough ; and she

would send back a kind answer tied to the collar of her dog Tristram, and all would be smooth again.

The young couple set up house in Ipswich, but before long they moved to Bath, taking a house at £50 a year, which Mrs. Gainsborough thought an extravagance that would land them in a debtor's prison. The extravagance, however, proved wisdom in the end. Bath was then one of the gayest towns in England. All the great folks, and the folks who wanted to be thought great, used to come down to "take the waters," and for a good part of the year the place was just like the fashionable part of London set down in the country. Gainsborough quickly made a name for himself as a painter of the great ladies and gentlemen who used to crowd the Pump Room, and it was in the fifteen happy and busy years he spent at Bath that he really learned the mastery of his art.

After fifteen years he came to London, where Reynolds was in the very height of his fame ; and very soon the whole fashionable world realised that though Gainsborough's painting was as different as possible from Sir Joshua's, it was just as fine. For the remaining fourteen years of his life he was never idle, recording with his swift grace the lovely features and dainty dresses of all the great ladies of the time. Sometimes, indeed, his sitters found that they could not command the artist exactly as they

wished, for Gainsborough had a quick, independent temper of his own, and could not put up with a fool, even though he might be a titled fool.

One day a very self-satisfied gentleman was boring him with directions as to how he wished to be painted, and particularly and repeatedly requested him not to forget the dimple in his chin. "Confound your dimple," said Gainsborough at last, "I will paint neither it nor you." It was the same hot temper which led to his quarrel with the Royal Academy over the hanging of his pictures, so that for the last years of his life he ceased to exhibit; but at heart he was one of the kindest and most generous of men, and there is no more lovable soul than Thomas Gainsborough in the whole story of British Art.

He was still at the very height of his skill and success when, early in 1788, he was attacked by a deadly disease. As he lay dying, he sent for Reynolds. The two men had been rivals for many years, and there was not much room for friendship between the quiet, prudent Sir Joshua and the brilliant, careless Gainsborough; but the near approach of death brought reconciliation. The two great men talked together for some time, and as they parted the dying Gainsborough whispered, "We are all going to Heaven—and Van Dyck is of the company." So, with a kind thought and a

bright hope, closed the brilliant, happy, generous life of one of the greatest geniuses who ever handled a brush.

Here we have two of his pictures. The first, the Hon. Mrs. Graham, hangs in the National Gallery of Scotland at Edinburgh, and I do not know of a picture which will show you better the beauty and grace of a noble lady of the days when George III. was king, or the magic of a great painter. The picture has a sad little story belonging to it. Mrs. Graham died in the very prime of life and beauty, and her husband, afterwards one of Wellington's most trusted officers in the Peninsular War, could never bear to look on her picture again. One story says that he walled it up in the room where it used to hang, another that he sent it away to be stored in London. One way or the other, it was lost and forgotten for many years ; but, fortunately, when it came to light again it was found to be uninjured. So you have it here, the memorial of a great painter, and a great sorrow. Nothing more exquisitely graceful was ever painted.

In our next picture you have a Gainsborough girl to set beside little Miss Bowles. I must say that here I think Sir Joshua perhaps comes off best ; though I know some good judges think differently. Anyhow, little Miss Haverfield is very charming and dainty, with her mob cap under her tremendous hat,



Mrs. Graham.



and her general air of trying to look as grown-up as she possibly can. I wonder how any of you would like to wear such a rig-out, not for a fancy dress ball, but for your ordinary walks and games ! But, of course, those were the dreadful days when boys and girls called their father and mother "Sir" or "Ma'am," and when the little girls were always so very, very good that they never dreamed of thinking long white dresses a nuisance—perhaps !

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THE lives of the two great painters of whom we have been talking were, I think, wonderfully happy ; but we can scarcely talk of happiness in connection with the life of the third, George Romney, though he was both a very great and a very successful painter. And the saddest thing of all is that the unhappiness was of his own making. Romney was born at Dalton-in-Furness, in Lancashire, in 1734. Up to his twenty-first year he was only a village joiner ; but the natural love of art that was in him could not be hid. His master saw that the lad was meant for something very different from joinery, and advised his parents to set him to learn painting ; and when he was twenty-one the future artist was apprenticed to a travelling portrait-painter, a great rascal, whom the folks of the country-side knew as Count Steele. Two years of such teaching were enough for Romney. During a dangerous illness,

he fell in love with the girl who nursed him, and on his recovery married her and settled down for a while as a portrait-painter in Kendal.

But his mind was full of the great world beyond, and he longed to prove himself in London. Perhaps he was conscious that he had powers that fitted him to shine in any place; perhaps he had heard, as has been suggested, of a remark that Sir Joshua was reported to have made to a student : “Married! Then you are ruined as an artist!” Anyhow, he made up his mind, and when he was twenty-eight, he burned his boats. One way and another the young couple had saved £100. Half of this he left with his wife and their two young children, and with the other half he set out for London to put his fate to the touch. It was the beginning of what seemed a most wonderful success; but no man can ever make a real success out of a great selfishness, and I think that it was Romney’s selfishness in thus deserting his wife and children to satisfy his craving for fame that wrecked his life at last. His young wife made no complaint, even though the years slipped past and he gave no sign of sending for her to share his growing fame; but his own conscience can scarcely have failed to reproach him.

In London it was not long before fortune came to him. Even from the first he was astonishingly successful, and when he returned from Rome in



Miss Haverfield.

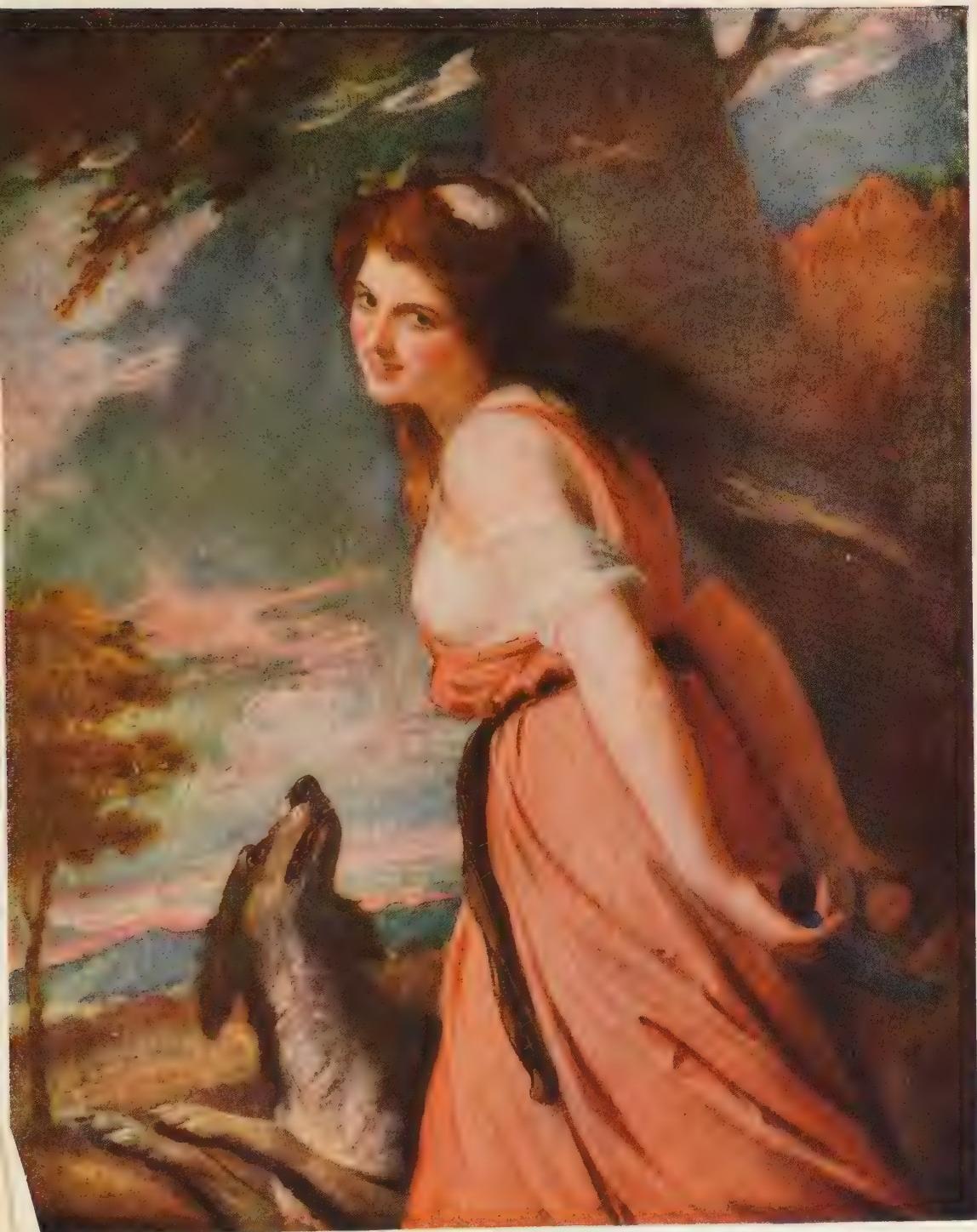


1775, after two years of study there, he became the fashion at once, and all London was running after him. His studio was besieged by eager sitters, and even the great Sir Joshua's supremacy was seriously threatened. "All the town," said Lord Chancellor Thurlow, "is divided into two factions, the Reynolds and the Romney, and I am of the Romney." A magic change for the Lancashire carpenter. Often, no doubt, in his early days, he had dreamed of fame; he could scarcely have imagined anything more remarkable than that which really came to him.

Yet he was never happy. Instead of Sir Joshua's calm, quiet, equal temper, or even Gainsborough's bright, happy-go-lucky spirit, he had a shy, nervous, distrustful nature. He was always suspecting people of despising him and plotting against his fame, and so, even at the height of his success, he was miserable. Can you wonder, when you remember the deserted wife in Kendal? No doubt he sent her enough money to live upon; he could well afford it; but the wrong was there, and the great painter could scarcely help feeling all the time that his life was built upon a great injustice and cruelty. Yet, though he once or twice went down to Kendal to see his wife, he never moved a finger to bring her to her rightful place at his side. And I think that injustice poisoned his whole life for him.

After Sir Joshua's death in 1792, Romney was left without a rival; but he could never have been happy though the whole world had been at his feet. Gradually he grew more and more nervous, suspicious, and miserable; brain and hand together began to fail, and at last, in 1799, he left London, and crept back to Kendal, to die, like a wounded creature, in his old nest. Mary Romney, whom he had treated so cruelly, took him in without a reproach, and watched over him tenderly and lovingly as he sank into more and more hopeless gloom and insanity, till, two years later, he died. It is a sad story, the only beautiful thing in it the loving patience of the great painter's ill-used wife. "This quiet act of hers," says an English writer, "is worth all Romney's pictures—even as a matter of art," and I think it is true.

Let us look now at two of the pictures for which Romney paid a price that no man has any right to pay. The first is famous all the world over—"Lady Hamilton with a Goat." The title will perhaps be a bit of a puzzle to you, for the goat has faded away almost altogether. You will see what is left of it just at Lady Hamilton's hands, behind her back. Perhaps it faded out, feeling that it was not a great success, for from what is left of it, it looks as though the poor creature, even at its best, had been drawn from a stuffed goat on wheels. But all the rest of the



Lady Hamilton.



picture is wonderful. Indeed, for pure loveliness I am not sure but this is the finest of all that I have to show you. The girl is beautiful, the colours in which she is painted are exquisitely fresh and harmonious, the landscape behind her is delightful, the dog is as happy as a dog can be. You cannot help feeling that the whole thing happened just so, that this lovely girl has just run out for a scamper with her dog on a fine morning, when the dew is on the grass, and the clouds are driven across the blue sky by a fine fresh breeze, and the whole world is happy. Yet the girl of the picture had a story stranger even than Romney's, and almost as sad.

I have given you the Clavering children as our second Romney, that you may compare his work with Reynolds and Gainsborough. Some people think he was at his best with children, but I must confess it does not seem so to me. The Clavering boy and girl are very dainty and very neat, and altogether the picture is a beautiful one; but still I think it would have been better if the young folks had not been quite so tidy; and I can never help feeling how uncommonly tired Master Thomas John Clavering must be after holding that right arm of his up for 140 years to keep the spaniel from jumping on his fine clothes. Yet, when all is said, there are very few painters who could paint anything so fine.

Of all our four, Romney is the one whose pictures have had the strangest ups and downs in popularity. A few years after his death no one would buy them at any price. Nowadays almost no one CAN buy them, because prices are so high. There is one well-known portrait for which he was paid £120 when he painted it. A few years ago its owner refused an offer of £16,000 for it.

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FOR the fourth of our great quartette we come to Scotland, and we find in Sir Henry Raeburn a painter who is fit company for the very greatest. There is really very little to tell you about his career. It is just the story of a good, sound-hearted, honest man, who knew the kind of work for which he was fitted, and who did it steadily and devotedly all his life, painting always better and better as the years went on, because his heart was in his work. Romney hated portrait painting, though he made all his fame by it; Gainsborough loved to turn from his portraits to landscapes, and if he had not left us such wonderful portraits we should still count him one of the first of our landscape painters; Sir Joshua had a hankering after painting big scenes from history or poetry that nobody can be bothered with nowadays; but Raeburn did nothing but portrait painting all his life, and never seemed to wish for anything else. No doubt he did it partly because it paid him to do it;



The Clavering Children.



but all the same, I think no one can look at his splendid pictures without feeling that this man thoroughly enjoyed painting the fine Scotsmen and Scotswomen who sat to him, and put all his heart into his work.

Unlike the other three, Raeburn never plunged into the whirl of London. He was born near Edinburgh, he was trained, first as a goldsmith, then as a painter, in Edinburgh. He met his future wife while sketching near Edinburgh, and though he went, like others, to Rome for a while, it was in Edinburgh that all his work was done, and in Edinburgh that he died, shortly after being knighted by King George IV. And we may be very glad that this was so. Raeburn in London could only have told us over again another version of what Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Romney had told, and what Sir Thomas Lawrence, in his weaker way, was going to tell. But Raeburn in Edinburgh came just at the right time to catch and to preserve for us all that was most interesting in a form of life which was going to pass away for ever in a few years.

For Raeburn's time was the time of Sir Walter Scott, when the beautiful northern capital was beginning to spread out beyond the lines of the old ridge that runs from the Castle to Holyrood, and to form all the spacious streets and squares that now extend from Princes Street to the Firth of Forth.

The good folks of the town, gentle and commons both, had a strongly marked character of their own, and were not in the least ashamed of it. The time was passing away when fine ladies, in their silks and satins, used to step out of the narrow closes of the old town, like gay butterflies from a dingy chrysalis; but the older ladies still used the broad Scots tongue, and great lawyers still had their "high jinks" after their court work was done, like Councillor Pleydell in "*Guy Mannering*." Indeed, if you want to know the kind of people who lived in Edinburgh in those days, you can scarcely do better than read Robert Louis Stevenson's "*Catrina*," Scott's "*Guy Mannering*," and Stevenson's "*Weir of Hermiston*" and "*St. Ives*," which among them cover almost the whole period of Raeburn's life from his birth to his death. And all the great folks of those fine old days in Edinburgh, the Pleydells and the Braxfields, the Barbara Grants and the Flora Gilchrists, came to Henry Raeburn's studio, first in George Street and then in York Place, and were made immortal, so far as skilfully handled paint could do it. For Sir Henry had an eye that saw, not only a pretty picture, but the real nature of the people who sat to him, and a hand that could put down all that he saw in such masterly fashion that now we can all see it too.

Sir Henry Raeburn was before all things a manly man. When one of his friends suggested to him

that he ought to try to pull the strings in London so as to be elected to the Royal Academy, he wrote, "If they choose to elect me without solicitation, it will be the more honourable to me, and I will think the more of it; but if it can only be obtained by means of solicitation and canvassing, I must give up all hopes of it, for I would think it unfair to employ these means." That is a very different spirit from poor Romney's thin-skinned suspiciousness; and when you look at Raeburn's pictures you see his frank, manly nature reflected in them. The men he painted were real men, and the women, fine and handsome as they often are, are not too fine to be kind and useful. Gainsborough's ladies perhaps wear their fine clothes more gracefully; but I think Sir Henry's would make better friends and helpers.

In the Scottish National Gallery you will see many of the folks who made the Old Edinburgh that Sir Walter Scott loved and wrote about, as real and living as when they were on earth. There is old Lord Newton, whom people used to call "The Mighty," huge in person, a giant at drinking and feasting, witty in conversation. Raeburn has painted him all in reds, from his judge's gown to the colour in his cheeks and the hint of it on his nose. I do not say it is beautiful; but you know the man in a moment as though you had lived beside him. There is old Dr. Adam of the High School, with his wise,

kindly face, the fine old schoolmaster who taught Sir Walter, and whose last words, as he lay dying, were, "But it grows dark, boys; you may go." You turn to the fine ladies, and there is Mrs. Scott Moncrieff, lovely and gentle in her crimson robe and white gown, with the most beautiful, wistful, liquid eyes that ever looked out of a picture; or Mrs. Hamilton, tall, dignified, and shrewd, who used to hang in the same room with Gainsborough's Mrs. Graham, and made a splendid contrast with that lovely picture. To go through the rooms is to see the Edinburgh of Sir Walter Scott's days living again around you.

Or you go down to Trinity House, Leith, and there is Admiral Duncan, who beat the Dutch at Camperdown, one of the fiercest of our naval battles. As de Winter's fleet came on, Duncan called his captains together on board the "Venerable"—"Gentlemen," he said, "You see a severe Winter approaching; I can only advise you to keep up a good fire." When you look on the calm face, you can fancy the grim jest falling from the firm lips; and when you see the mighty frame of the admiral, you remember how the mutineer who approached Duncan was suddenly seized by the collar and held at arm's length in one hand over the bulwarks, while the indignant admiral turned scornfully to the crew,—"Look, my lads," he said, "At this fellow who dares to dispute my authority."



Sir John Sinclair.



People like these were the people whom Raeburn loved to paint, and no one could put them before you so convincingly as the great Scottish painter.

Here, then, is the famous Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster, in the uniform of the Rothsay and Caithness Fencibles—in other words as an officer of his own county militia. Try to understand for yourself how difficult a thing the painter had to do in this great picture. He had to paint a uniform which, to say the least, is both loud and gay, almost gaudy, in its multitude of bright colours; and yet so to paint it that it should not offend the eye, and should never distract your attention from the fact that it was not the uniform, but the man inside the uniform that was of importance. See how he has accomplished it! The gay colours are all there, perfectly accounted for; but they are all so harmoniously blended and graded that they please the eye, instead of offending it, and they are all so kept subordinate to the fine stalwart figure and the noble head, that your immediate impression is, “What a splendid man!”—and you only realise afterwards what gay clothes he is wearing. Only a great painter could have done this, and conveyed so perfectly the character of the man represented. It needs no words to tell you that Sir John Sinclair, who raised two thousand men for the defence of his country at the time of the Napoleon scare, was quite sure that, though it might

be a fine thing to be King George, it was a much finer thing to be Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster. Perhaps, after all, he was not far wrong.

For our last picture I have given you Raeburn's "Boy with a Rabbit," to stand beside the children of the other painters. In spite of his refusal to canvass, he was elected to the Royal Academy, and this picture is what is called his "Diploma" picture, the picture which a Royal Academician has to present to the Academy when he is elected. I do not know that it is quite Raeburn at his best, for the great Scotsman was never so happy as when dealing with a face that had seen service, so to speak ; but all the same it is a very fresh and pleasant piece of work, and in spite of the absurd clothes, which must surely have made boys' lives miserable in those days, the boy is a true boy, gentle enough perhaps, but quite capable of soiling and tearing his spick and span garments. Sir Henry, I fancy, knew more about children than any of our other three great men, for his great house in Edinburgh was always full of them, and Lady Raeburn spoiled all her little friends ; and though he does not paint them very often, his child pictures are nearly always bright and happy.



Boy with a Rabbit.









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